

REMARKS

The Examiner has stated that claims 7 and 22 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 15-21 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Naffziger et al. (US 6,243,287) in view of Favor (US 5,819,056).

Applicants representative, Anthony Palagonia, held an interview with Examiner Hassan on January 30, 2007. Applicants representative asked if the Examiner would allow claim 7 if it included only the limitations of base claim and not of intervening claims 5 and 6 since there was no indication that claims 5 and 6 contained allowable material. The Examiner stated he could not since not including the limitations of intervening claims 5 and 6 would change the scope of claim 7 and require a new search.

Applicants representative also asked if the Examiner would allow claim 7 if it included only the limitations of base claim and not of intervening claims 5 and 6 since there was no indication that claims 20 and 21 contained allowable material. The Examiner stated he could not since not including the limitations of intervening claims 20 and 21 would change the scope of claim 20 and require a new search.

Applicants respectfully traverse the §103(a) rejections with the following arguments.

35 USC § 103 Rejections

Applicants have rewritten claim 7 (which the Examiner indicated would be allowable) in independent form including the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claims 5 and 6. Applicants have amended claims 3, 4 and 15 to depend from claim 7. Applicants have canceled claims 1, 5 and 6. Therefore Applicants maintain the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-6 are moot. Since claims 2-4 and 8-15 depend from claim 7, Applicants maintain claims 2-4 and 8-15 are likewise allowable.

Applicants have rewritten claim 22 (which the Examiner indicated would be allowable) in independent form including the limitations of base claim 16 and intervening claims 20 and 21. Applicants have amended claims 17, 19 and 30 to depend from claim 22. Applicants have canceled claims 16, 20 and 21. Therefore Applicants maintain the Examiner's rejection of claims 16-21 and 30 are moot. Since claims 17-19 and 23-30 depend from claim 22, Applicants maintain claims 17-19 and 23-30 are likewise allowable.

CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding arguments, Applicants respectfully believe that all pending claims and the entire application meet the acceptance criteria for allowance and therefore request favorable action. If Examiner believes that anything further would be helpful to place the application in better condition for allowance, Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below. The Director is hereby authorized to charge and/or credit Deposit Account 09-0456.

Respectfully submitted,
FOR: Buti et al.

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